

EPHRAIM MECHAM AND
POLLY DERBY

Ephraim Mecham was born March 8, 1808, in Canaan, Grafton County, New Hampshire, a son of Joshua and Permelia Chapman. He married Polly Derby, a daughter of John Derby and Sarah Currier on November 29, 1828, in Mercer, Erie County Pennsylvania. Polly was born August 13, 1813 in Grafton County, New Hampshire. Polly died at Wallburg December 1, 1898 at 85 years. Ephraim died at Wallburg July 6, 1891 at 83 years. Both are buried there.

As a boy Ephraim lived an exemplary life. He did not use bad language, or tobacco or strong drinks. He kept good company and when 15, joined the Reformed Methodist Church. Being religiously inclined he was

961

prepared for the true gospel when he heard it. It was in 1836 that his father Joshua first heard the gospel. He and his wife Permelia, and his sons, Edward, Ephraim, and Lewis and their wives were baptized in 1837 and in 1838 they gathered with the saints in Missouri, but were stopped by a mob at Quincy who would not let them cross the Mississippi River. They suffered many persecutions with the rest of the saints and were driven from place to place. One night they had to sleep in the woods with their little children and watch their home be burned to the ground by an angry mob. They also lived in Nauvoo.

They crossed the plains in 1852 and settled in Lehi, Utah, where they lived until 1862 when they moved to Weber County. They came back to Provo and then moved to Wallburg. At this time the Indians were causing much trouble.

One winter they got snowed in, in Wallburg, in snow so deep no one could get out. Their provisions were scanty and their flour supply gave out. They lived mostly on meat. The following spring Ephraim paid \$20 for a 100 pound sack of flour. He suffered many hardships during his long and useful life but it was a happy life. He and Polly lived to celebrate their 62nd wedding anniversary.

Polly was a faithful wife and was very spiritual by nature. One night Polly had a dream and her niece Emily Mecham Haws appeared to her. Polly was living in Wallburg and Emily in Provo. There was no means of communication at this time. Polly said, "Why, Emily, are you dead?" Emily replied, "Yes, they wrapped me in a cold wet sheet and it killed me." Later Polly learned that Emily hemorrhaged while giving birth to a child. The child died and in trying to stop the bleeding they used sheets dipped in cold water, wrapping her with them.

It is claimed that Polly was once cured of an unknown malady in the following manner. She had been a practical nurse and home doctor for many families, but neither she, nor anyone else seemed able to find a cure for her illness. She became very weak and was unable to move any part of her body, except to wiggle one big toe. The family stood mournfully by, expecting death to claim her at any moment.

One day a man came to her bedside and

taking her wasted hand, said, "Madam, you are a very sick woman, but you are not going to die. If you could see your liver it would scare you. It has ulcers on it as big as my thumb. Have watercress brought and eat as much of it as you can every day and you will get well." Watercress was brought from the spring close by and the simple directions followed. Polly recovered.

As doctor woman, she helped 500 women through confinements and was known and loved throughout Wasatch County for her service to mankind.

Polly was a faithful wife and prayerful mother, true to the end. She maintained her love for poetry mingled with a strong love of the gospel. She composed the following poem on her sixtieth wedding anniversary.

We heard the gospel in our youth,
A still small voice said "It is truth."
We left our homes and friends in tears,
And now it's over fifty years.
And now dear children, I would say to you,
The path of truth and righteousness pursue,
You have been to me a constant care,
For I have offered my daily prayer.
I want you to be plants of honor and renown,
That I may present you in the courts above
To my friends that are gone, which I so
dearly love.

I have tried to polish my jewels bright,
Of your virtue and honor, I have never lost sight,
Prepare to meet me on the other shore,
Where pain and sorrow are known no more.
Where I have done wrong, pray forgive,
I do not know I have another day to live.
I have lived to see full seventy-six years.
My path has been strewn with sighs and tears.

Now I hope you will remember,
The twenty-second day of November.
When you will come home to celebrate,
The sixtieth year of our wedded state.
Full sixty years have passed away,
Since our happy wedding day.
We traveled on together,
Through both pain and stormy weather.
And now we are nearly down the hill.
We love and cherish each other still.
We are holding fast to the iron rod,
And love to obey the commands of God.
Their children: Moses, Permelia, Lewis,
Elvira, Emma Marie, Hyrum Moroni, Sarah
Ann, Ephraim, Don Carlos, Mary Henriette,
Polly Celestia, John Albert, Adelia Vilate.